IDENTIFYING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PUBLIC INTEREST IN PARTICIPATION

by Lorenz Aggens

Most government agencies, when they are confronted with the requirements, or understand the advantages of public involvement in their work, think first of forming an advisory committee or holding a public hearing. Many agencies think only of forming an advisory committee, or only of holding a hearing.

The tendency to utilize only these techniques reflects a failure to clarify who is "the public" that needs to be involved. There is no single public, but different levels of the public based on differing levels of interest and ability. The design of public involvement programs must take into account levels of the public other than the socioeconomic elite who can take the time to participate on an advisory committee, or those who will stand up and make a speech at a large public hearing. This paper will identify--based on practical working experience--all the levels which need to be considered.

The factor that distinguishes one level of participation from another is the amount of interest and time the public has to give to this activity, and the amount of commitment and staff resources the agency sponsoring the participation has to offer to facilitate it. In the ideal condition, the agency will have time, money and dedication that will match each level of public interest, knowledge and availability. Opportunities for participation would span the range from disinterest in the project, to control of the project's outcome.

LEVELS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITY

Six levels of public participation activity seem apparent when these are defined by the human energy needed to sustain them. In describing these levels of activity, it may be useful to borrow from astrophysics and think of each level as an "orbit" of activity around the project nucleus--the decision-making process. The closer an orbit of activity is to this decision-making center, the greater opportunity there is for public influence in that decision. But gaining the inner orbits of influence requires the application of greater amounts of human energy by the participating public, and offering these inner-orbit opportunities requires increased effort by the staff of the agency that is the object of this public participation.

The diagram on the next page shows these six orbits of public participation activity. It may look like a target, and there is some analogy between the decreasing amount of area in each ring and the decrease in the number of participants that are usually found as the decision-making center of the project is approached. The concept behind the image of orbits of participation is that both the participant and the sponsoring agency must expend more energy to achieve and maintain the more active orbits. The allocation of human energy is a critical factor in everyone's mind as decisions are made about offering public involvement opportunities, and accepting them.

This is an original article describing material used in IWR training programs by the author.

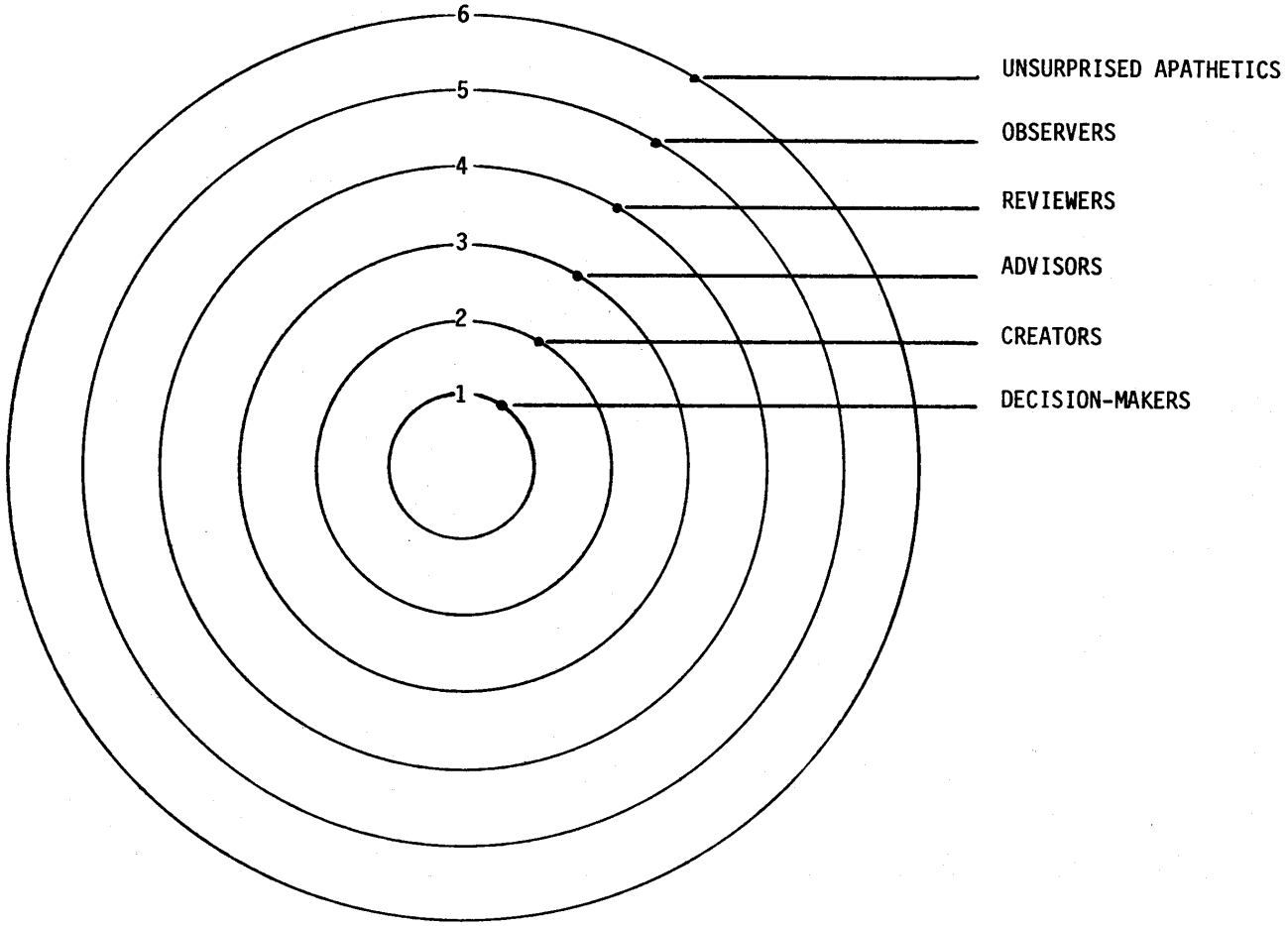
ORBIT #6--The Unsurprised Apathetics:

The outermost orbit of public involvement in a project or proposal is that of disinterest. Disinterest is very much different from ignorance. It requires that information about the project has been made available by the project agency, and that it has been evaluated by some people as having no particular impact on them. They are, therefore, disinterested. The term "unsurprised apathetics" has been used to describe people in this orbit, not to depreciate their level of interest, but to call attention to two important characteristics of it: (1) they are not ignorant of what is going on--they are not necessarily well-informed about the project, but they are not surprised by its existence; and, (2) they have chosen not to become involved--which is, in fact, a distinct form of involvement. In projects involving large populations, the choice of apathy by large numbers of people is critical to the progress of the project. Unsurprised apathy can be taken as "permission to proceed" when two conditions have been met: (1) the public information program has been adequate in presenting the project's purpose and likely effects insofar as the general public is concerned; and, (2) there are opportunities for greater involvement in the project by those of the public who find that their interests and concerns warrant more than apathy. The disinterest and inactivity of an unsurprised apathetic can and will be revoked instantly when any one of these participants finds his or her interests suddenly affected by a project finding, conclusion or recommendation. The energy available for more extensive participation will rise dramatically if an unsurprised apathetic learns of this change in his or her interest by accident and surprise, rather than by deliberate action of the sponsoring agency.

ORBIT #5--The Observers:

They are out there, watching. It is hard to know who they are, or how many of them there are. The observers say little or nothing to the project staff. They save their energies for reports on their observations to other units of government, to public interest groups, and to special interest organizations. It is frustrating to the agency's public information staff to work without feedback from this largely anonymous audience. The tendency by project managers to cut down on the size of a mailing list--to "weed out" those who do not seem to be interested, demolishes this orbit of participation. When observers report to their constituencies on the progress of the project, they need detailed and up-to-date information on project findings, conclusions, and likely recommendations or actual proposals. If they say that ". . . everything is OK . . . ," they achieve something that the agency cannot get for itself. It is the trust in the evaluation of how things are going that comes from the trusted observer's assessment of what is happening. Unsurprised apathetics can safely continue in their disinterest. On the other hand, the call to action of an observer can result in an upwelling of interest in involvement in the project by individuals and organizations that were previously unknown or counted as disinterested.

ORBITS OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITY



Some people participate as observers in their own self-interest alone. They are not observers for any group. Their motives and methods are the same, however. They watch, listen and read. They may become more active if easy opportunities for participation are offered. They will become more active if access to information is restricted or cut off, if they are taken by surprise by project events, or if decision making in the project loses its transparency and becomes technically mysterious or politically suspicious.

ORBIT #4--The Reviewers:

When interest, or concern, or knowledge about the project increases, so too does the energy available for involvement in influencing the way the project turns out. But for many people, there still may be too little time available for intensive service such as on an advisory committee. Freedom from other responsibilities of life is a luxury afforded to limited numbers of people, and this has a direct affect upon the composition of public participation groups that must actually hold meetings to accomplish involvement activities. The reviewers occupy the orbit of participation in which interested people can react to project questions and proposals at times of their own convenience. The work of reviewers can be done by mail or telephone. The opportunity to participate might include all of the people on the project mailing list. The reviewer list is typically large and inclusive. There are a variety of methods for reaching reviewers: Clip-out coupons have been printed in newspapers and thousands of responses have been received on issues of widespread public interest. Workbooks have been used in planning projects to survey several thousand people who returned a postcard saying "YES," they were interested in the project. In these workbooks, participants were asked to indicate whether they "agreed" or "disagreed" with a list of project proposals, and why. If agencies want to tap the orbit of the reviewers, it is necessary that the agency increase its efforts enough to formulate questions and a response format which allowa reviewers to participate at their own convenience. In response, these participants also increase the energy commitment enough to record their opinion on the questions presented. In effect, the opportunity for unsurprised apathetics and observers to change orbits and become reviewers is made easy.

ORBIT #3--The Advisors:

Energy requirements increase sharply in this orbit of participation. The project agency organizes committees, calls meetings, arranges space and perhaps food service, prepares special materials and presentations, keeps records of the meetings, and generally interacts with participants in ways that encourage their further involvement. The participants increase their energy output in a comparable manner. They give up time from other activities to attend meetings; they prepare for involvement by studying and consulting others whose interests they may represent; they offer opinions, ask questions, debate with others, invent, innovate, and evaluate. Advisors are often the salaried staff of public and private agencies whose work on advisory committees is in the line of normal duty. If they are not compensated for advisory committee work, they often are officials of the organizations whose interests they represent.

Ideally, room on advisory committees should be left for individuals who are not representatives of organized interests--people who are directly affected by the project either in terms of benefits or costs. The important characteristic of advisors is their very high interest or concern that must be matched by equally high levels of

commitment and effort by the project agency to encourage, facilitate, and account for the participation of advisors. If the design of public participation programs begins and ends at the advisor orbit, the needs of the reviewers, observers, and unsurprised apathetics are overlooked or discounted; and the benefits of involvement with people of even greater interest and knowledge are lost.

ORBIT#2--The Creators (Plan-Makers):

There are some people for whom the subject in which participation is sought is so important that their orbit of involvement goes beyond giving advice on the product under development. For them, interest and knowledge make their direct involvement in the creation of ideas and proposals a reality. Many agencies are unprepared to accommodate this orbit of participation. Product development is considered to be the job of the professional staff--influenced by public input in the identification of problems, needs, goals, objectives, and in the assessment of alternatives and their impacts. It is a major step in the direction of participatory decision making for agency staff to create environments in which they are reacting to and advising citizens in the creation of proposals for public decision-making, or working shoulder-to-shoulder with people compensated only by their interest and concern. The energy needed at this orbit of participation involves large quantities of time and effort for the participants, and, what may be even harder to find, large amounts of commitment by agency staff and decision-makers to sharing historically given or hard-won agency influence and power.

ORBIT#1--The Decision Makers:

It is surprisingly easy to recall public involvement in the actual control of decisions. The referendum on whether to build a new school, or purchase the open space, or build the sewage treatment plant are participation experiences in which most people have had the opportunity to be involved. They are often evidence of general public disinterest in which the majority of eligible participants have chosen to give "permission to proceed" (or maintain the status quo) by their unsurprised apathy. More subtle forms of participation at the decision maker orbit can be found. Some people, for whom the impacts of a decision are very great, are occasionally given what amounts to a veto over agency proposals. "If the people in this neighborhood don't like the solution we come up with, then we will not use that solution!" This is the kind of promise of decision-maker participation that might be offered in a politically sensitive environment--or offered as a creative opportunity: "This agency will adopt and implement the plan that the citizen task force recommends!" The important characteristic of participation in this most influential orbit is that at least a vote in the final decision, if not actual control over that decision, is given to those participating. Obviously, energy requirements are very high for both the agency and the participant.

SUMMARY

This description of six levels or "orbits" of public participation in the public decision-making process has attempted to expand the range of what might be considered in the design of public involvement programs. Some observers and theorists of public participation processes have cautioned that ideas about the public's role in public decision-making range from meaningful involvement (often defined as "control" of the process), downward through programs of public information, education, and salesmanship, to programs that are designed to co-opt the public and provide "social therapy" to activists. Certainly there have been many public participation programs that have done little more than try to make the public feel good for long enough to get an engineered consent to preconceived agency plans.

Care must be taken not to throw the public out along with the participation programs that have little or no commitment to honoring the public's right to know what is going on, and their right to try to influence its outcome. Public participation programs that offer only the chance for a limited public to serve in advisory orbits of involvement activity eliminate the chance for each member of a larger and more representative public to recognize his or her own level of self-interest and decide at what level of human energy to participate in advancing or protecting that interest.

IDENTIFYING PUBLICS/STAFF IDENTIFICATION TECHNIQUES

by James L. Creighton

THE CONCEPT OF PUBLICS

One of the most important principles in designing a public involvement program with representative participation from the public is that "the public" is a mythical beast roughly akin to the average family with 2.1 children. The term "the public" is a useful theoretical concept but in fact no such thing as a monolithic single body which can be called "the public" actually exists, just as no family of 2.1 children actually exists. In fact, all of us belong to many publics. These publics may be economic, professional, geographical, social, or political, but we all tend to join together with others of like interests either for pleasure or when we wish to accomplish something. Some of these publics may be relatively well organized such as a political party, a professional association, or a social group. Others are relatively unorganized and become noticeable only when they are strongly affected by a particular issue, e.g., residents who live on a particular street when there is a proposal to put a freeway nearby. As a result, it is far more useful to talk in terms of publics rather than "the public" to remind ourselves that we are in fact dealing with many interests and groups rather than a single monolithic body.

It is an observable phenomenon that most political decisions are made by a minority of actively involved and interested citizens. This has led to the notion that the remainder of the public is "the silent majority." Usually the concept Athe silent majority@ is used as a justification for contradicting the apparent demands of the active minority, thus a politician, an agency or an interest group may claim, "If we could just hear from the silent majority...then it would be clear that our policies have the support of the people." The advantage, of course, of claiming the silent majority support is that as long as they remain silent nobody will contradict. In fact, the minute someone contradicts they have clearly become a part of the active minority and can make no further claim to represent the silent majority. In fact, "the silent majority" is another mythical beast which does not in fact exist and rests on the assumption that somehow the silent majority is totally in agreement (despite the fact that all of the active minorities are in dispute over almost every issue). In reality, it is far safer to assume that the silent majority contains just as many diverse opinions as does the active minority, but that the silent majority has chosen not to participate either because they do not see the issue as having much impact on them or they do not believe that they can affect the outcome. In addition "the silent majority" is not a fixed class of people: Someone who may be very active on one issue may be silent on another. People move in and out of the active minority on particular issues depending upon their perception of how much of a stake they have in the issue.

There has been considerable research on the reasons that people remain in the silent majority and the three reasons most frequently given are:

Reprinted from: IWR Training Program, Creighton, et al., "Advanced Course: Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning," U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1977.

1. They feel adequately represented by someone in the active minority -- Leaders of visible interest groups often serve as "surrogates" for a much larger group of people who feel represented by the activities of their surrogates. Most of us belong to some group in which we do little more than send our annual dues in order that the group will represent our particular interests. A case in point might be a professional group such as the American Society of Civil Engineers or the American Institute of Planners. This means that "special interest groups" play a surrogate role that makes them an integral and necessary part of an effective operating democracy.

2. People are unaware that they have a stake in a particular decision -- Everyone makes choices as to which activities they will involve themselves in when their life is often already hurried and pressured. We tend to involve ourselves in those issues which we see could result in major impact on our personal lives. As a result every citizen has the right to choose not to participate in decisions that they perceive as of lower value than earning a living, spending time with their family, or some other civic issue in which they are involved.

3. People don't believe they can influence the decision -- One cause of "apathy" is people's belief that no matter what they do they will have no impact on the outcome. Without well-defined methods by which people can have a reasonable hope of influencing things, few but the best organized interests are likely to participate.

Our obligations in public involvement are:

1. To inform as broad a segment of the public as we possibly can of the stake they may have in the issue under study.

2. To clearly inform the public how they can have an impact on the outcomes of the study and provide them with well-publicized access to the decision-making process through meetings or other public participation activities.

3. To systematically target the publics to insure the representativeness of the active minority with which we are most likely to be working.

These first two obligations -- informing the public of their stake in the study and providing well-publicized activities by which the public can gain access to the study's decision-making process -- are met with a well-designed information program coupled with a well-designed public participation program. However, the third obligation -- targeting the publics -- requires some systematic thought which is the subject of this article.

THE AFFECTED PUBLICS

In targeting publics we are attempting to identify those persons who believe themselves to be affected by the study outcome. The difficulty is that the degree to which people feel affected by a study is a result of their subjective perception; people the agency feels are most directly impacted may not be as concerned as someone that the agency perceives as only peripherally involved. However, the starting point always remains

some effort to objectively analyze the likelihood that someone will feel affected by the study. Some of the bases on which people are most likely to feel affected are:

1. Proximity: People who live in the immediate area of a project and are likely to be affected by noise, odors, dust, or possibly even threat of dislocation, are the most obvious publics to be included in the study.

2. Economic: Groups that have jobs to gain or competitive advantages to win, e.g., bargemen vs. truckers, are again an obvious starting point in any analysis of possible publics.

3. Use: Those people whose use of the area is likely to be affected in any way by the outcome of the study are also likely to be interested in participating. These include recreationists, hikers, fishermen, hunters, etc. In some cases these users, such as whitewater rafters, are among the most vocal participants in a study.

4. Social: Increasingly people who see projects as a threat to the tradition and culture of the local community are likely to be interested in projects. They may perceive that a large influx of construction workers into an area may produce either a positive or negative effect on the community. Or they may perceive that the project will allow for a substantial population growth in the area which they may again view either positively or negatively.

5. Values: Some groups may be only peripherally affected by the first four criteria but find that some of the issues raised in the study directly affect their values, their "sense of the way things ought to be." Any time a study touches on such issues as free enterprise vs. government control, or jobs vs. environmental enhancement, there may be a number of individuals who participate primarily because of the values issues involved.

MAJOR APPROACHES TO TARGETING THE PUBLIC

A recent study of mailing lists developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers indicated that 70 percent of the mailing lists consisted of governmental interests. This indicates a clear need to target participation from a much wider range of interests and publics. The three broad categories of approach to targeting the public are:

1. Self-identification

2. Third party identification

3. Staff identification

SELF-IDENTIFICATION: Self-identification simply means that individuals or groups step forward and indicate an interest in participating in the study. The use of the news media, the preparation of brochures and newsletters, and holding of well-publicized public meetings are all means of encouraging self-identification. Anyone who participates by attending a meeting or writing a letter or phoning on a hot line has clearly indicated an interest in being an active public in the study. As a result it is critical that anyone who expresses

an interest in the study in any way quickly is placed on the mailing list and is continually informed of the study progress.

THIRD PARTY IDENTIFICATION: One of the best ways to obtain information about other interests or individuals which should be included in the study is to ask an existing advisory committee, or representatives of known interests, who else should be involved. One variation on this theme is to enclose a response form in any mailings inviting people to suggest other groups that should be included. These simple techniques of consulting with known representatives to recommend others who should be involved often prove to be one of the most effective means of targeting the public.

STAFF IDENTIFICATION: There is a wide range of techniques by which internal staff can systematically approach targeting the public. These include:

1. Intuitive/experiential information: Most planning staff that have worked in an area for some period of time can, if asked, immediately begin to identify individuals and groups that are likely to be involved in any new study. One of the richest sources of information for possible individuals or interests to be involved would be internal staff who have worked in the area for some period of time.

2. Lists of groups or individuals: There are numerous lists available which can assist in targeting the publics. Among these lists are included:

    - Yellow Pages
    - Chamber of commerce lists
    - City and county directories
    - Direct mailing lists of groups of various types (these must be purchased)
    - Lists maintained by sociology and political science departments

3. Geographic Analysis: In many cases just by looking at a map it is possible to identify publics who reside in a flood plain or downstream from a sewer treatment plant or within the possible "take-line" of a reservoir, etc.

4. Demographic Analysis: The U.S. Census Bureau maintains considerable information on demographics, e.g., age, earnings, race, etc. Those that are most likely to be usable in targeting publics would be statistics concerning the elderly or nonwhite.

5. Historical Analysis: In many cases there is considerable information in old files. This includes:

- Lists of previous participants in earlier studies included in reports.
- Correspondence files.
- Newspaper clippings regarding similar studies.
- Library files on past projects.

6. Consultation with other agencies: Since numerous agencies have held public involvement programs on issues that may be similar it can often be useful to explore their files or consult with them concerning possible publics. Examples of this approach might include:

    - Examination of Housing and Urban Development 701 Program Files.
    - Consultation with the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, State Fish and Game Departments, etc.
    - Consultation with local planning staff concerning participation in land-use planning studies.
    - Direct interviews with study managers of previous studies for other agencies who may be able to provide substantial information about the total political climate in which the study will be conducted.

7. User Survey: When an area is heavily used by recreationists there frequently are records kept, such as permits issued or some other form of registration at the recreation site, which can identify many of the user publics.

IDENTIFYING PUBLICS AT EACH STAGE OF PLANNING

Our experience suggests that the same publics are not necessarily involved in each stage of planning. Some stages of planning require public review from the broadest range of publics attainable. Other stages require a degree of continuity and an understanding of the technical data base which tends to limit participation to a "leadership" group.

By "leadership" we mean those individuals who are perceived by others as having knowledge in the field. Typically they will be in the leadership roles with environmental, business or civic groups. Some are seen as leaders precisely because they are not identified with a particular point of view, but are seen as "objective" and "reasonable."

While there is no attempt to exclude broader publics during those planning stages which are focused primarily at "leadership" publics, the public participation techniques used tend to be aimed at smaller numbers of people.

One method of analysis which may be useful is to identify these different levels of "publics":

1. Staff of other Federal, state and local governmental agencies;

2. Elected officials at all levels of government;

3. Highly visible leaders of organized groups or identifiable interests, e.g., leaders of Sierra Club, chamber of commerce;

4. Membership of organized groups or identifiable interests, e.g., members of Audobon Society, farmers, or recreation home owners; and,

5. "General public" not identified with organized groups.

At different stages of the planning process all five groups may need to be involved, at other stages only a few of these levels will be targeted.

Some of the issues to be considered in identifying which publics should be targeted for each planning stage are:

1. Which publics are capable of providing you with the information you need at this planning stage?

   If the information you need is general values reactions, then you may want to aim for the broadest range of publics. If the information you need is relatively specific or technical, then you may wish to seek out a leadership group.

2. Which publics will be able to understand the information you will be providing at this planning stage?

   If you are expecting the public to absorb highly detailed and complex information, then you may need to aim at leadership publics. If you have organized the materials into a "digestible" form, then you may be able to draw on the participation of a more general public.

3. How much time will be involved in participating?

   Typically, only the "leadership" publics are able to make any extensive time commitment.

4. How much continuity is required?

   If the participation at this planning stage requires some form of continuing participation, e.g., attending a series of meetings, then participation is typically limited to leadership publics.

5. Whose participation is required either for "visibility" or "political acceptability"?

> Again, the notion that at some stages of planning you may be dealing primarily with leadership publics is not intended to be exclusionary, but rather a realistic expectation of the level of participation you can expect even though broader publics are invited to participate.

To avoid the dangers of producing an "elitist" public participation program, we follow the general rule: Any planning stage during which we have worked primarily with "leadership" publics will be followed by a more general review by broader publics.

Or to put it another way: You may be limited to "leadership" publics when developing a product such as sets of alternatives; but both for visibility and political acceptability that product must be reviewed by a broader public.

REFERENCE:

A major reference in the field of identifying the publics is:

Willeke, Gene E., Identification of Publics in Water Resources Planning, OWRR Project, B-095-GA. Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia 30332, Sept. 1974.

"INFLUENTIAL" IDENTIFICATION: RESEARCH METHODS AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

by Thomas E. Borton, Katherine P. Warner
and J. William Wenrich

Purpose

The purpose of the Susquehanna Communication-Participation Study was to develop new ways of informing influential segments of the public about the problems and issues in water resource development in their own region, as well as about the process of water resource planning in general. Also, the study was aimed at developing more meaningful mechanisms of public participation in the planning process. The purpose of this paper is to explain the method by which key local individuals were identified and to describe some of the more salient characteristics of these influentials.

Introduction

For over 15 years social scientists have studied actions by local leaders trying to ascertain who, in fact, are the people who really make the decisions about key issues in given communities. For convenience, the various research methods used can be grouped in four main categories:

1) Positional.[1] Using this approach, the researcher assumes that the individuals occupying positions of formal authority and prestige have the primary influence upon major community decisions.

2) Reputational. This approach assumes that there is "power behind the scenes," that there are people who persuade, advise, or strongly influence the positional authorities, and that this group can be identified by asking informed local people who they think has this influence, i.e., who has the reputation for being influential.

3) Decisional.[2] Using this method, the researcher assumes that the power structure can best be identified by analyzing which people have been influential in past key decisions. The presumption is that they will continue to exercise influence in similar decisions in the future.

[1]See Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure, Chapel Hill, N.C.: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1953.

Reprinted from: IWR Report 70-6. Borton, Thomas E., Warner, Katherine P., and Wenrich, J. William. "The Susquehanna Communication-Participation Study: Selected Approaches to Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning," U.S. Army Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Dec 1970.
[2]See Robert Dahl, Who Governs?, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961.

4) Verstehen.[3] This method incorporates elements of the first three along with a subjective interpretation by the research team of the meaning of the various statements and events. Use of this technique contrasts with a rigorous application of a single empirical approach.

Whatever method is used, valid results may have the following significant implication. Local people with influence may not have access to the technical knowledge they need for decisions. If indeed the people who make or influence major community decisions can be identified, they can also be provided with technical and social knowledge which may help make the decisions and planning process itself more rational, democratic and productive. This is particularly important with respect to the problems which transcend the local community, involving state, regional and Federal agencies. When key people lack issue and process knowledge in technically complex areas, such as water resource planning and development, local interests and preferences may be preempted by state and Federal agencies. This is, in fact, what frequently happens in water resource development since many of the policy decisions are made on the basis of Federal or state laws, regulations and standards. Identifying and informing local influentials can have significant potential for increasing local participation in planning and decision making in issue areas which extend beyond the community. Increasing local water influentials' store of knowledge and their ability to use it could thus significantly alter both their relationship with state and Federal authorities and the process by which water resource decisions are made.

Definition of Community Water Influentials

For the purposes of this study, influence was examined in terms of one area: Water resource planning and development. Even with respect to this one issue area, influentials can be characterized in terms of several dimensions. First, their influence may be prescribed or attributed; that is, they may exercise it by virtue of their formal position or by virtue of the fact that other people look to them for guidance and decisions. Secondly, such individuals may actually exercise influence (in observable situations) or they may merely have the potential to exercise influence if they wish. Thirdly, their influence may be positive in the sense of initiating action, or negative, in terms of stopping or vetoing action initiated by others.

[3]See T. Abel, "The Operation Called Verstehen," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 54, Nov. 1948, pp 211-218.

In this study, "community water influentials" are defined as those people who have the greatest demonstrated or perceived ability to make or affect policy decisions about water resources in their area of the Susquehanna River Basin.[4]

Research Methods

The following method was employed by the University of Michigan research team to secure information about individuals who are influential in one problem field (water resource planning), in one geographical area (five counties in the Susquehanna Basin). Simultaneously, it was also aimed at establishing a rapport with and active concern on the part of such persons for public participation in water resource decision making. In some cases, the data acquired in the interviews and questionnaires were viewed as somewhat less important than the personal involvement obtained.

The approach used in this study for identifying influentials is best classified as Verstehen. (In many respects it resembles the "Community Social Profile" technique developed by Irwin T. Sanders.[5] A team of five research interviewers was formed. The team first compiled available published data on the five designated counties and their major cities with particular regard to local water resource problems and issues. Newspaper files in the area were reviewed regarding such issues and names of key individuals involved in local water problem decisions over the past 20 years were noted. In addition, discussions were held with state and Federal officials involved in water resource planning and management for the respective areas. Finally, a list of potential community water influentials was compiled. The list included: nominations from national organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, and AFL-CIO, the National Association of County Organizations, and the National League of Cities; names of individuals who had participated in public meetings held by the Susquehanna River Basin Coordinating Committee; and individuals whose names were mentioned in newspaper articles as having been active in water resource projects or decisions in the past.

Following Sanders' method, the research team operated as a group. At least three members of the team actively interviewed to acquire data in each county. Sanders pointed out that "this builds more cross-checking into the operation because more trained people are reacting to the community and interacting with each other."[6] The interview team met nightly to compare notes and to prepare a written summary of the day's events and interview results.

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[4]This definition derives in part from a prior study by Spenser W. Havlick in the Milwaukee River Basin. Spenser W. Havlick, Attitudes Held by Water Influentials about Major Obstacles in Establishing Institutional Arrangements in an Urban River Basin, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1967.

[5]Irwin T. Sanders, "The Community Social Profile," American Sociological Review, XXC, No. 1, Feb, 1960, pp 75-77.

[6]Sanders, op.cit., p 76.

The purpose of the interviews was not only to collect data on the respondent's perceptions, preferences and knowledge about water resource problems--it was also designed to add to the list of names of water influentials. In the course of the interview, each respondent was asked to name other community people whom he felt were water influentials. Specifically, he was asked, "Suppose a major problem in water resource development was before the community--one that required a decision by a group of leaders who nearly everyone would accept. Which people would you choose to make up this group--regardless of whether or not you knew them personally? Why would you choose them?" This technique of identifying more influentials on the basis of nominations by those interviewed--the "snowball" technique--brought to light a number of names not originally listed.

The interview also included other questions regarding what major disagreements, if any, had occurred in the community over the use of water resources; which people the respondents felt were technically knowledgeable; and which organizations were actively concerned with aspects of water resource development. Answers to these questions provided additional insights about which persons exercise influence in dealing with community water problems. For example, when discussing issues or organizations, the interviewer would ask the respondent who were the key people involved, and if the respondent himself was one of them.

Most of the respondents had some influence in one or several areas of water resource development since, in fact, the initial list was designed to include most of the individuals who had prescribed influence based on their formal positions. Because the public-at-large does not generally involve itself in water problems until there is a crisis, the initial list concentrated on identifying relevant governmental officials, representatives of various interest groupings in the community (such as farmers, industrialists, sportsmen, conservationists, etc.) and general civic and private organizational leaders. Reputational or attributed influentials were then identified and in each community, the interviewers attempted to contact any individual named at least twice by other respondents. On the average, this resulted in doubling the number of people to be interviewed. The final influential list for the water resource area was probably smaller than a list intended to reflect general community influentials over a whole range of public issues.

Findings

For purposes of analysis, the research team differentiated between reputational and prescribed community water influentials. A reputational influential was defined for study purposes as an individual who was mentioned as being influential five or more times by other respondents.[7]

On this basis, in the whole five-county study area there were 64 reputational influentials interviewed. Fourteen additional reputational water influentials were identified but not interviewed due to time limitations. The remaining respondents were classified as prescribed influentials since their inclusion in the study list was based on either their organizational position or on actions they had taken in regard to various community

[7]The number of nominations was reduced to three for Broome and Tioga counties (N.Y.) because of the larger population in relation to the number of people interviewed in Broome County and because of the smaller number of interviews done in Tioga County.

water issues. The following table shows the number of reputational and prescribed influentials identified for each county.

County	Total Influentials Identified	Reputational Influentials Identified	Prescribed Influentials Identified
Broome County, New York	45	12	33
Tioga County, New York	20	8	12
Chemung County, New York	45	16	29
Steuben County, New York	39	10	29
Tioga County, Pennsylvania	35	18	17
Outside 5 County Area	5	0	5
Totals	189	64	125

Characteristics of Respondents

The 64 reputational influentials interviewed can be compared with the prescribed influentials in terms of various characteristics such as: position, amount of education, age, time in county, perceived influence on the planning process and knowledge about water problems.

Proportionally, more reputational influentials were either heads of private enterprises or elected officials. All those in appointed public offices who were classified in the reputational category were heads of agencies rather than line staff members. The following table summarizes the positional differences between the reputational and prescribed influential groups.

The predominance of private enterprise chief executives and elected officials among reputational influentials coincides with findings of other studies.[8] A more striking finding was the complete absence of second level public agency people in the reputational grouping. Typically, individuals interviewed in this category were environmental health engineers, public health and pollution officials, and others directly concerned with water resource problems. Many of them were named, however, as technical people to whom the reputational influentials turned for reliable information.

[8]See Kent Jennings, Community Influentials (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964.) pp 44-48 and Robert Presthus, Men At the Top, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.) p 178, and Havlick, Op. Cit., pp 60-61.

POSITIONS OF REPUTATIONAL AND PRESCRIBED WATER INFLUENTIALS

Positions	Reputational Influentials		Prescribed Influentials		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Private Industry-Head	25	39%	40	32	65	34
Private Industry-Nonhead	4	6	11	9	15	8
Elected Official	21	33	12	9	33	17
Public Agency-Head	10	16	25	20	35	19
Public Agency-Nonhead	0	B	13	10	13	7
Other (education, philanthropy, housewife, etc.)	4	6	24	20	28	15
TOTAL	64	100%	125	100%	189	100%

Reputational influentials did not differ appreciably from prescribed influentials with respect to the amount of formal education they had obtained. The level was generally high for all those interviewed: nearly 60% had college degrees and over one-fourth had taken some graduate work. Overall, the level of education of community water influentials was quite a bit higher than that of the 1960 general adult population of the five-county study area. The following table compares the educational levels of reputational and prescribed influentials and the area's adult population.

Community power studies have generally shown that influentials have lived the majority of their adult lives in the community being studied.[9] Community water influentials in this study are no different. All but three of the 64 reputational influentials interviewed had lived 10 years or more in the present county, while 63 percent of the prescribed influentials were also 10-year or longer residents. Overall, only 26 percent of those interviewed had lived in their present county less than 10 years.

1[9]See Kent Jennings, Community Influentials, (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), and Robert Presthus, Men at the Top, (New York; Oxford University Press, 1964).

Reputational community water influentials on the average tended to be older than prescribed influentials. The following table shows the two groups' age distribution as well as that of the 1960 general adult population of the five-county study area.

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS: REPUTATIONAL AND PRESCRIBED INFLUENTIALS AND 1960 ADULT POPULATION

	Reputational Influentials		Prescribed Influentials		1960 Adult Population[10]
Education Level	No.	%	No.	%	%
Less than HS degree	2	3%	5	4%	58
High school degree	10	16	20	16	28
Some college	12	19	16	13	8
College degree	20	31	41	33	{
Graduate work	5	8	11	9	{
Graduate degree	9	14	24	20	7%[11]
No response	6	9	8	6	
TOTALS:	64	100%	125	100%	100%

[10]Those 25 years and over.

[11]The equivalent percentages for an educational level of a college degree or more are: reputational influentials--53 percent and prescribed influentials--62 percent.

AGE LEVELS: REPUTATIONAL AND PRESCRIBED INFLUENTIALS AND 1960 ADULT POPULATION

	Reputational Influentials		Prescribed Influentials		1960 Adult Population[12]
Age Levels	No.	%	No.	%	%
Under 40 years	7	11%	27	22%	40
40-49 years	16	25	40	32	19
Over 50 years	37	58	54	43	41
No response	4	6	4	3	--
TOTALS:	64	100%	125	100%	100%

The researchers were interested in learning whether reputational and prescribed water influentials could be differentiated in terms of the influence they felt they had had on local water resources planning development. The reputational influentials were more likely to feel they had personally exercised some influence on water resource development in their area. Nearly 30 percent said they had a good or great deal of influence, compared to 14 percent of the prescribed influentials. The next question then becomes, why do they think they have more influence and on what factors are their opinions based? The reputational influentials felt their power was based somewhat more than did the prescribed influentials on actions they had taken and on the fact that they represented an organization. The major difference between the two groups was the extent to which they perceived their influence to be based on knowledge. Less than 12 percent of the reputational community water influentials felt that their influence was based to a good or great extent on their technical knowledge, according to their questionnaire responses. On the other hand, 28 percent of the prescribed influentials who answered the questionnaire felt that whatever influence they had had was based to a good or great extent on their technical knowledge.

Summary

This paper has described the method by which community water influentials in five counties of the Susquehanna River Basin were identified and studied. The method was eclectic, using certain aspects of positional, decisional and reputational approaches. Influentials were then described in terms of selected sociodemographic characteristics.

There is no "typical" community water influential. However, to summarize, a community water influential in the study area could generally be characterized as: the head of a business organization or a public agency, over 50 years of age, college educated, a county resident for most of his life, and a man who generally perceives his influence in water resources planning to be based on his organizational position rather than on his technical knowledge of water resources.

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[12]Those 20 years and over.

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IDENTIFYING INFLUENTIALS IN THE COMMUNITY POWER STRUCTURE

by James. L. Creighton

A major task in designing a public involvement program is to identify the publics--the groups and individuals--who are impacted by a decision or will be influential in making a decision. Sociologists and social psychologists have wrestled with this problem of identifying influentials in the community power structure for a number of years. This paper will deal with how their findings and methodologies might be used in identifying publics as part of the public involvement program.

DEFINING THE COMMUNITY

The first problem in defining the community power structure is to define the community being studied. While on the surface this might appear to be a rather simple issue, the academic literature displays numerous approaches in defining the community, each of which stresses one aspect of community life as being the most significant criterion of what constitutes a community. The simplest of definitions is that a community is simply an aggregate of people living in a geographic area, but such a definition does not deal with the fact that many communities have a strong sense of cohesiveness and identity which is not explained by the mere fact of where people live. The second major consideration in defining a community is the economic purpose served by the community. Theorists who stress the economic basis of the community point out that most communities began as the marketplace at which agricultural products produced in surrounding areas were sold or exchanged. Using such a definition it was possible to define a community by defining an economic "sphere of influence," the furthest geographical limits at which farmers traded with one community instead of going to another.

People's identification with a community is not based solely on their economic interests, but often is based on a sense of shared experience. Many smaller communities have historically provided people with a sense of "connectedness" through common values, shared history, or simply the fact that others around knew who you were, knew your family, and knew your own personal history. It is this feeling of "connectedness" or "belongingness" which has caused some theorists to comment that modern society does not provide us with a "sense of community," meaning a sense of connectedness or belongingness or common shared identity with other people.

Other theorists have defined community in terms of political and social life of the community. Still other ways of defining the community emphasize a social and economic ecology which establishes the outside limits of the community.
All of these definitions of community, however, have suffered substantially during the last 25 years because of major social changes. All of these definitions imply the ability to establish some kind of boundary, whether

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it was a geographic and economic or "shared experience" boundary which allowed you to identify the outer limits of the community. Many social trends of the last 25 years make these boundaries increasingly abstract and arbitrary. One major factor in reducing the geographical boundary as a criterion for community has been that as population has rapidly increased, once discrete communities have now become simply a part of the urban complex and can be distinguished from other parts of the urban complex only through some purely legal boundary such as the city limit. Major changes in processing and transportation of agricultural goods have also frequently reduced reliance on local markets for the sale of agricultural products. Substantially increased mobility of the population has reduced the degree to which people living in the same area have shared experiences, common values, or a knowledge of each other's personal histories. Political control is now shared through an incredible array of overlapping local, regional, state and Federal authorities so that the amount of control that is left at the local community level is now substantially reduced. Finally, and this may be the most significant of all, there has been a substantial change in the number of people who identify themselves with their local community versus those who identify themselves either with the total urban area to which their community relates, or even relate primarily to the country as a whole through professional interests or employment with a national concern.

HORIZONTAL VERSUS VERTICAL LINKING

The increasing tendency for people to identify with a broader regional or national interest rather than with their local community has caused sociologists to come up with the notion of horizontal versus vertical linking. Horizontal linking is the term used by sociologists to describe relationships between groups in the same community. When people and groups within the same community primarily relate to other people and groups in that community, then the horizontal linking is very strong. Vertical linking is the relationship of individuals and groups primarily to the outside society. This is particularly likely to occur when the individual identifies with others of a similar profession (lawyers, doctors, manufacturers) or is employed by a regional or a national agency or company so that both his economics and status are more linked to how people in the outside society feel about him than how they are viewed by the immediate community in which they live.

These differences in horizontal versus vertical links can be most dramatically seen in upper middle class suburban communities where one neighbor may be a successful local druggist who has spent his entire life in that community and is well known and respected within the community, but has travelled little and defines himself primarily in relationship to that community; while his next door neighbor may be an executive in a multinational corporation and regularly conducts business in Europe and Asia and vacations with friends in South America or Hawaii. While the executive of the multinational corporation may well have greater status in the society at large, the local druggist may, in fact, occupy a much greater power role when it comes to making decisions that affect the local community. Sociologists have discovered this phenomenon and have come up with the distinction between "locals" versus "cosmopolitans." The "locals" have power in the community based on their relationships with others in the community. In academic terms the "locals" have an extensive network of horizontal links. The "cosmopolitans," on the other hand, tend to have vertical links based on their professional knowledge and expertise, so that whatever power they have in the community is based not on who they know but on what they know. In addition, it appears that when "cosmopolitans"

attempt to influence local issues, they are more likely to work through existing organizations than through personal contacts. As a rule, "cosmopolitans" are interested more in a field or an issue rather than in a permanent position of leadership. One way to contrast the two groups is to say that the "cosmopolitans" possess expertise or knowledge that may allow a community to solve a problem, while the "locals" possess an understanding of local needs, desires and feelings which causes others in the community to trust them. By and large, the studies indicate that the influence of "cosmopolitans" is usually limited to those specific fields in which they have expertise and they have little or no influence in more general social issues. The "local" on the other hand, is likely to have influence in a large range of issues independent of their expertise in any particular field.

THE CONDITIONS FOR CONTROVERSY

The importance of the social phenomenon of vertical linking can be illustrated by studies of the conditions under which controversy occurs which indicate that controversy is less likely to occur unless there are vertical links in the community. Coleman has identified three criteria which are necessary for major conflict in a community:

1. There is a small group of local activists who gain moral support and often information from national groups.

2. There is a national climate of concern about issues similar to that being faced in the local community.

3. There is a lack of close and continued contact between public officials and the concerned public.

One way of viewing these criteria is to say that without the absence of vertical links the "locals" would be able to control decision making with little or no challenge. It appears that without the moral support and occasional technical assistance from national interests, that the "cosmopolitans" are unable to challenge the power base of the "locals."

Even if these three conditions exist, not all events in a community will lead to controversy. A major flood in a community, for example, rather than breeding conflict usually brings a community together in a shared experience. Coleman has again identified three factors which seem to be critical for an event to trigger controversy or conflict in a community:

1. The event must touch an important aspect of people's lives.
2. The event affects lives of different community members differently.

3. Community members must feel that they are capable of taking some action regarding this event or circumstance.

Probably the most critical one of these three elements is the degree to which an event affects the lives of different community members differently. Those issues around which conflict is most likely to occur are: 1)

economics, 2) power or authority, and 3) cultural values or beliefs. A controversial issue creates cleavages between one economic interest and another, between one source of power or authority and another, or between cultural values. Many times the controversy will affect lives of different community members along an existing cleavage line. For example: the outcome of a decision might favor one existing economic group over another, one political figure over another, or the cultural beliefs of the "old-timers" versus the "newcomers." Any issue that breaks along cleavage lines that are already existing in the community will become much more exaggerated, for that issue becomes a battleground for preexisting conflicts between groups in the community.

THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY POWER STRUCTURE

Early sociological studies emphasize the notion of a "power elite," a small group of individuals who were able to make most of the important decisions affecting a community. These studies describe the number of communities in which as few as 10 or 15 individuals seem to make all the important decisions for the community. More recent literature, however, has been dominated by the "pluralists." The pluralists have presented numerous case studies in which either there were competing power sources, so that there were several "elites" competing for political dominance, or people exerted power only within limited spheres of influence, so that decisions were made by fluid coalitions of interested parties. Competing "elites" might occur if there was a split in the community between the "oldtimers" and the "newcomers" or when there was a clear economic conflict between downtown business interests and suburban business interests. When decision making occurs within spheres of influence, an individual may have a considerable degree of power within one field such as water resources but have little or no influence on taxes, housing, welfare or medical care. In these communities there may still be an "elite" but it is a rapidly changing "elite" and the power of that "elite" is limited to only one sphere of influence.

There is considerable evidence that the degree of pluralism increases with the size of the community. It also increases with the amount of vertical linking to the outside society as there is considerably more competition for power within communities with substantial vertical links. It would appear in communities of considerable size and complexity, that the ability of any individual to influence more than a few spheres of influence becomes increasingly difficult.

Several theorists have argued that the important issue was not who was making the decision, but how well communities were able to adapt when they faced a problem. Thus, the emphasis would be shifted from how the decisions were made to the ability of the community to produce effective solutions to their problems. In addition, studies were conducted to see whether communities where the decision-making power was concentrated in the hands of a limited number of people were more effective in coping with community problems than communities in which the decision-making power was highly dispersed. Preliminary studies produced highly contradictory results. However, recent literature suggests the following general premises:

1. When decisions impact an entire community, as they would on a tax issue, then the community may be able to respond more effectively with concentrated decision-making authority.

2. If decisions affect different people differently, as they would on welfare or housing issues, then dispersed decision-making seems to be more effective in solving community problems.

IDENTIFYING LEADERS

The early studies into "power elites" indicated that the members of the "power elite" did not necessarily hold their power by virtue of a recognized leadership position such as elective office or presidency of a bank, as much as by personal reputation. As a result there is general acceptance that it is not possible to assume that you have identified community leadership merely by identifying all the organized groups and their leaders within a community. In fact, it appears there are many different kinds of leadership which can be studied and analyzed using different methodologies. Like the controversy between the "pluralists" and those who believe in a monolithic power elite, there are considerable theoretical differences when it comes to the argument of what constitutes leadership. Generally, however, the arguments fall into four categories as indicated below:

Leadership Position - An individual may exert leadership in the community by virtue of their position or rank within a powerful organization. Such a position might include political office, the head of a large bank, the president of a local university, etc. The perceived power of this individual is not always directly related to the degree to which they personally participate in decision making, but may be a result of the influence of the organization they head. The president of a local university, for example, may be personally involved only in a limited number of issues, but if the university itself participates in a substantial number of issues then his influence is perceived as substantially greater than his individual participation.

Reputation of Leadership - These are the individuals who are believed to be "the big men in town." They are reputed to have the ability to affect a wide range of decisions whether or not they choose to exert this power. If this reputation for leadership is not based on a visible leadership position within the community as indicated above, then it is highly probable that this individual is a "local" who exerts power through an extensive network of relationships with others in the local community and is seen as having power by virtue of their personal contacts with everyone within the community.

Participation in Prior Decisions - Both of the categories above may indicate only the individual's potential for power rather than their actual assertion of power within the community. One way to determine who actually exerts power is to see who, in fact, did participate in prior decisions. One way to forecast who is likely to have an influence on a water resource issue, for example, is to analyze who in fact did participate in previous water resources issues within the community.

Participation in Community Activities - Another way to measure a person's leadership within the community is that they are actively involved in a wide range of community activities, political, social, cultural and charitable. Their power comes by virtue of their personal contacts in several spheres as well as their ability to influence through a variety of organizational relationships.

METHODOLOGIES

For each of the forms of leadership indicated above, sociologists have developed a methodology for identifying people in these leadership positions. The literature strongly suggests that there are advantages to utilizing several of these methodologies as cross-checks to insure the adequacy of the study. However, it should be pointed out that the objectives of someone using these methods in public involvement may be somewhat different than a person conducting an extensive research study. In public involvement our major objective is to do a reasonable job of identifying all the decision makers so that they can be informed and provided opportunities to participate in the decision. A formal sociological study, on the other hand, is held up to rigorous examination by the academic community which goes beyond immediate effectiveness in identifying influentials for a particular study. As a result, it may be desirable to employ simplified and more modest variations of these methodologies for the purposes of public involvement.

Identifying Individuals in Leadership Positions

This is by far the simplest approach to identifying leadership within a community in that you start by first identifying visible groups that may have an impact on a decision and then identifying their leaders. In many ways this is identical to the staff identification techniques described in another workshop. Studies have indicated that the most critical categories which must be reached in order to have a reasonable range of influentials are: 1) business, 2) government, 3) professions (doctors, lawyers, etc.), 4) education, 5) communications (News media, TV, etc.), 6) labor, and, 7) religion. Most studies do indicate that leaders of such organizations exert considerably more influence on a decision than middle level staff people within their organizations. One study, for example, distinguished three levels of leadership: 1) institutional leaders, 2) effectors--staff people within those institutions who were able to exert power by virtue of their access to the individual leaders, and, 3) activists who possess little or no organizational power base within the community, but were able to exert some influence on decisions by virtue of their constant participation and their links to national organizations. One measure, however, of whether middle level staff people of an institution may be important in decision making would be if these individuals show up as influential using methodologies to identify their participation in prior decisions or their involvement in a wide range of community activities.

Reputation of Leadership

Most efforts to identify the "reputed" leaders are some variation of the procedures described below:

1. Develop a list of readily identifiable leadership within the community based on available published literature, newspaper stories, or discussions with other state and Federal officials involved in water resources planning and management.

2. Conduct a series of interviews with these identified influentials. During these interviews they would be asked to identify which individuals they thought would be most influential in making decisions. In the Susquehanna Communication-Participation Study conducted for the Institute of Water Resources, the question asked of each interviewee was: "Suppose a major problem in water resources development was before the community, one that required

a decision by a group of leaders who nearly everyone would accept. Which people would you choose to make up this group, regardless of whether or not you knew them personally? Why would you choose them?"

3. After several interviews have been conducted it is usually possible to begin to develop a list of names which are frequently mentioned, and it is then possible in subsequent interviews to use the list either as a score sheet for the interviewer or actually have the person being interviewed review the names on the list, indicating those which he thinks are influential and adding additional names if desired.

4. Interviews are continued then with all of those people identified on the list of influentials. In effect, this technique is a "snow ball" approach in which you ask visible leaders who they consider to be influential, then interview the people they've identified to ask who they consider to be influential, etc.

Clearly such a technique can reach a point of diminishing returns and several studies have indicated that, beyond a certain point, the frequently mentioned individuals on the list did not change regardless of the number of interviews conducted.

Participation in Prior Decisions

The methodology used in identifying those who have participated in prior decisions is essentially similar to that used in identifying "reputed" leadership. The procedure:

1. Develop a list of prior decisions affecting similar issues within the community.

2. Develop a list of visible leaders who are likely to have participated in some of these decisions.

3. Conduct a series of interviews with these influential people and ask them to identify in which of the past decisions they did or did not participate.

4. For all of these decisions in which they did participate, ask them to indicate who else participated in the decision making.
5. When a name has been mentioned by several individuals, then conduct an interview with this individual and continue as needed using the "snow ball" approach.

Participation in Community Activities

The methodology for this form of leadership assumes the development of a rather large list of community leaders utilizing any of the three methodologies described above. Then a questionnaire is sent to all the identified influentials asking them to identify their affiliations with a wide number of social, political, cultural and charitable organizations. The results are tallied based on the total number of organizations to which an individual indicates an affiliation, on the assumption that the more organizations to which an individual belongs the more likely he is to exert a broad range of influence within the community. Thus, using this methodology an individual who belongs to 20 organizations is considered to be more influential than an individual who belongs to 2 or 3.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THESE METHODS

As indicated previously, these methods are designed for extensive sociological investigations and so may have a purpose broader than their application in the public involvement field. As a result, it is necessary to carefully evaluate the appropriateness of these methodologies for your study. A few guidelines are provided below which may be of assistance:

1. Evaluate the appropriateness of the technique in your community. Many people are very sensitive to surveys, questionnaires, and other "sophisticated" techniques and so may react unfavorably to the use of techniques if they are unable to see a clear connection between the technique and the purposes of the study. Individuals may well wonder, for example, what a questionnaire asking them to identify all of their organizational affiliations has to do with whether or not you're going to build a dam. Such approaches also begin to raise questions of invasion of privacy by governmental agencies.

2. Relate the techniques specifically to water resources planning. While the techniques for identifying "reputational" leadership usually ask a broad decision as to who is influential in making decisions, there is no reason why you cannot ask much more specific questions related to people's influence in the field of water resources planning. The only danger would be to ask the question in so limited a way that it excludes groups that may have an active interest in your proposed project, such as environmentalists who have not been specifically involved in water resources planning in the past but may be very concerned with such issues as growth inducement, environmental impact, etc. Relating questions specifically to areas of the study makes particular sense in larger communities where decision making is much more likely to be concentrated within "spheres of influence." Thus, there may be a constellation of individuals who are influential in making decisions in water resources planning who may have little or no influence when it comes to making decisions about health services within the community. It is also possible, of course, to ask more specific questions which will allow you to identify leadership within different interests within the community. Rather than ask who is influential in making decisions generally, you might instead ask who in business is

influential when it comes to water resources issues, or which environmentalists are influential in the water resources field, or who in agriculture is influential in making decisions on water resources planning.

3. Combine the techniques or use more than one technique. As indicated in the descriptions of methodology above, the techniques used for identifying people in leadership positions are essentially similar to staff identification techniques which are normally already used in public involvement programs. In addition, the methodologies used for identifying "reputed" leaders and those who have participated in past decisions are essentially similar in that they involve interviews with key individuals who identify other individuals who should be interviewed, who in turn identify other individuals, etc. It would, of course, be very simple in the same interview to ask not only who was influential in making decisions, but who had participated in past decisions. Both of these questions can be asked in such a way that they are relatively unobtrusive so that the person being interviewed does not have the feeling of being "studied."

4. Use the examination of community leadership as an opportunity to gain understanding of the total context in which water issues will be considered. When you find out who participates in water decisions, you also find out a great deal about how important water issues are in the community. If water issues are not major political issues within the community, for example, then they are far more likely to be left to a small group of leaders with a special interest or expertise in the water field. If water issues are major issues in the community, then there may be a much broader base of political participation. An examination of the context in which water issues are considered would also consider how water issues relate to other issues in the community. For example, a water supply issue may be one element in an ongoing community conflict between community factions which favor development or favor limited growth. A flood control project which protects downtown businessmen may be caught between competing downtown and suburban commercial interests. Finding out who participates in a decision will tell you something about the total context; finding out how water issues relate to overall community issues will tell you something about who will participate.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Much of the literature on community power is highly technical and abstract, and as a result, is not of general interest. There are, however, two sources which provide more background on the material described in this paper in a manner readable by the general public. The first is a paper titled, "Influential Identification: Research Methods and Socio-Economic Characteristics" contained in the Susquehanna Basin Communication-Participation Study, Institute of Water Resources Report, 70-60, December 1970. A readable first-hand exposure to the academic literature is provided in Hawley and Wirt, The Search for Community Power, Prentiss Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968.

CREATING A POLICY PROFILE

by William D. Coplin
Donald J. McMaster
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Policy profiling is a technique for assessing the impact of various individuals, groups and organizations on governmental agency decisions. The basic assumptions behind policy profiling are that in order to assess the impact of relevant individuals, groups and organizations on any possible decision or course of action, it is necessary to do the following:

- Identify the individuals, groups and organizations (the "actors") that are likely to have a direct or indirect impact on the course of action. This means including those who have a formal role in the making or blocking of the decision; it also means including those who have an indirect impact, such as those who will make it either easier or harder to carry out a decision after it is made.

- Determine whether each actor supports, opposes, or is neutral toward the decision.

- Determine how powerful each actor is in blocking the decision, helping make it happen, or effecting the implementation of a decision.

- Determine how important the decision is to each actor.

Whether we are talking about the President of the United States, a district engineer of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a business executive, a school superintendent, or the head of the household, effective decision makers always do this kind of thing, if only informally. The purpose of policy profiling is to provide a systematic framework and checklist which decision makers can use to make sure they carry out the kind of analysis required to assess the consequences of a decision. Policy profiling also aids decision makers in organizing their staffs and making use of other knowledgeable observers.

STEPS IN CREATING A POLICY PROFILE

The basic steps which are followed in creating a policy profile are shown below:

This article is adapted from a "learning module" on Policy Profiling developed for the Institute for Water Resources by the authors.

Step 1: Issue Definition

An issue is a decision or action which is likely to generate controversy. Policy profiling can be applied only if the proposed decision is clearly defined in specific terms. If an issue is defined as "protecting the interior wetlands of the area" or "improving the efficiency of the Corps' permitting procedure", it would not be possible to complete a policy profile. But profiling can be done on a specific issue such as "issue a general permit controlling the landfill activities of private landowners." The key is found in the verb used to phrase the decision. Verbs such as "protect" or "improve" are undesirable because they do not adequately specify the required action. Verbs like "restrict," "permit" or "build" are much more useful.

While decisions or actions need to be specifically defined in order to conduct analysis, trying to guess at the exact detail of the final formulation is not required. One of the main characteristics of reaching decisions affecting many actors is that the action is frequently redefined and modified as a result of the process of reaching a decision. The decision may begin as "issue a general permit that governs landfill activities of private landowners" and become modified to "issue a general permit that governs landfill activities of private landowners and commercial property under a certain acreage." Such a change may be required to obtain the support of important groups or to solve technical problems in administering the permit. The policy profiling technique can be applied to any number of proposed decisions (including redefinitions and modifications) as long as it is clear what specific action is involved at each step along the way.

Another important consideration in determining the decision to which to apply the technique is to make sure that there is both significant support and opposition. It is pointless to policy profile a decision that is either so well accepted or so widely opposed that the outcome is obvious. Of course, few decisions affecting the public result in overwhelming support or opposition. However, when they do come up, they do not need to be policy profiled.

Step 2: Identify Actors

An actor is any individual, group or organization that ought to be considered in making the decision. Reasons for consideration include the following: The actor has substantial legal authority; the actor has political influence to promote or obstruct the decision; or the actor will be seriously effected by the decision and may either help or hinder its implementation, even though it may not have much of a say in the actual making of the decision.

Identifying the actors to be considered is one of the most important steps in Policy Profiling. An important actor who is omitted or the improper grouping of actors can distort the analysis so much that it becomes useless.

Compiling a Complete List of Actors. Four types of actors should be considered in compiling your list. Figure 1 identifies the four types and gives examples.

Figure 1

CLASSIFICATION OF ACTORS

Type	Principal Location	
	Local to the Area of the Decision	External to the Area of the Decision
Governmental	City Government	State Departments
	County Government	(Natural Resources and Environmental Regulations)
		U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Nongovernmental	Developers	Environmental Groups
	Influential Citizens	

For the governmental category, the inclusion of an actor depends on whether the agency has clear direct or indirect legal authority over the question.

For the nongovernmental category, the guidelines for inclusion are not so clear-cut. Actors should be included who will be directly affected by the decision or who for one reason or another are considered to have influence on governmental agencies or on legislative representatives who might influence the agencies. Since we are dealing with judgments on who has influence, some well-established techniques of identifying influential actors can be used. You can review newspaper accounts; you can consult public documents on similar decisions in the past; and you can ask known influentials to identify others who are influential. Brainstorming among members of the staff about possible actors frequently helps identify individuals and groups that ought to be considered. External nongovernmental actors ought to be discounted unless there is evidence of direct contact and there is a local organization representing the national organization.

In order to keep the analysis within feasible bounds, limit the number of actors to 20 or even less, if possible. In situations where time is short, try to limit the number of actors to 10 or less. The reason for limiting the number of actors is to limit the time required for the listing and calculations required for policy profiling. Of course, if you have easy access to a computer, you could enter many more actors and get the calculation done very quickly (assuming the computer does not break down). Even if you have a computer to work with, you would still have to stop listing actors sometime, since most public decisions affect hundreds, even thousands, of people. Besides, if you

pick carefully, the estimates you make with a few actors will be as accurate as estimates made with many actors.

The principal way to limit the number of actors is to group individuals and organizations into collective actors for the purpose of analysis. The process of grouping frequently appears arbitrary and, as mentioned earlier, can seriously bias your results if it is not done carefully. However, there are some guidelines that will assist you in grouping actors to help improve the accuracy of your analysis:

1. Group actors together who have the same identifiable economic interests. In the earlier example, all the private developers were grouped together for this reason.

2. Do not group together actors that have veto power. This especially holds for governmental actors. In the example, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was kept separate from the Environmental Protection Agency, but the two state departments (natural resources and environmental regulation) were combined.

3. Do not group together actors if there is disagreement between them or if their components have widely unequal power. In the example, the city government was kept as a single actor because there was general agreement among all members of the government concerning the issuance of a general permit. Furthermore, each person in the governing unit had about equal power. If there were disagreements, or if some members were much more powerful than others, it would have been preferable to divide them into two (or more) groups.

4. Select a configuration of actors that taken together constitute a reasonable picture of the overall power distribution. Do not include an excess of actors that gives one side an unrealistic weighting. If there is one actor with an immense amount of power, that actor should be divided into enough smaller actors that the total power configuration is accurately reflected.

These guidelines are admittedly very general. The designation of the actors in the policy profiling technique is at least as much an art as a science. Your judgment in conducting the analysis is vital at every step. In one sense, this might be viewed as a weakness in the technique. But this is not the case. Policy profiling is a way of organizing and guiding judgment, not eliminating it. It would be foolish to ignore the importance of judgment and balanced insight (even if it were possible to do so) in the selection of actors as well as in the other aspects of policy profiling.

Step 3: Estimate Issue Position, Power, and Salience for Each Actor (see Figure 2)

Issue Position is expressed as a number ranging from +3 to -3 to indicate whether or not the actor supports (+3, +2, or +1), is neutral toward (0), or opposes (-1, -2, or -3) the decision. A "+3" is

assigned if the actor is firmly in favor of the issue and is unlikely to change; "+2" or "+1" indicates reduced levels of firmness of the actor's support. Similarly, a "-3" indicates firm opposition while a "-2" or "-1" indicates there is some softness in the opposition.

Power is expressed as a number ranging from 0 to 3. A "0" is assigned if the actor has no power or influence. A "1" is assigned if the actor has some power and a "2" if the actor has moderate power. A "3" is assigned if an actor has substantial influence, especially if the actor can veto or prevent the implementation of the decision.

Salience is expressed as a number ranging from 0 to 3. A "0" indicates no interest or concern for the issue regardless of the issue position or power. A "1" or "2" is assigned for those actors that have slight or moderate concern. A "3" is reserved for those actors that assign the highest priority to the issue.

The task of estimating each actor's issue position, power and salience can be done by an individual, but most frequently is completed by a small group familiar with the situation. It is possible to use a survey instrument when it seems necessary. The kinds of factors that should be considered in each category are as follows:

- Read and listen to what the actor says about the issue.
- Deduce from the actor's economic, social or political standing what its position is likely to be on the basis of self-interest.
- Weigh the implications of concrete interests against what it has said. When in doubt, use concrete interests for your estimate over mere verbalization.
- Look for differences among individuals and factions within an actor (or even inconsistencies in statements by an individual actor). If the contrasting positions seem evenly balanced, assign a "0" (neutral) issue position. If there seems a slight positive or negative balance toward the issue, assign a "+1" or "-1" for the actor's issue position.

When estimating an actor's power:

- Ask if the actor has the resources either to block a decision or to make one occur.

Figure 2: POLICY PROFILING QUESTIONNAIRE

ISSUE: _____

In the spaces below, summarize the relationships of each actor to the issues.

1. Circle the A-3", A-2", or A-1" to indicate the extent to which the actor opposes, A0" to indicate the actor is neutral toward, or A+1", A+2", or A+3" to indicate the extent to which the actor supports the issue. (ISSUE POSITION)
2. Circle the A0", A1", A2", or A3" to indicate the degree to which the actor can exert influence, directly or indirectly, in support or in opposition to the issue, relative to all other actors. (POWER).
3. Circle A0", A1", A2", or A3" to indicate the importance of the issue to the actor, relative to all other issues in the general subject area. (SALIENCE)

		Issue Position							Power				Salience			
1.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
2.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
3.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
4.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
5.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
6.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
7.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
8.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
9.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
10.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
11.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
12.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
13.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
14.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
15.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
16.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
17.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
18.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
19.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3

20.	_____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3		0	1	2	3		0	1	2	3

- Determine if legal authority is a consideration and if the actor possesses a large share of the authority.
- Determine, if wealth is a consideration, how much wealth the actor has in effecting the decision.
- Do not assume that an actor powerful on one set of issues in a community is necessarily powerful on all issues. It is true that an actor's high power on one issue means it may have power on other issues, but it does not assure high power.
- Consider the allies and enemies of the actor: Powerful allies make the actor powerful; powerful enemies diminish the actor's power.

When estimating salience:

- Determine the frequency and intensity with which the actor makes public statements about the decision.
- Deduce from the actor's social, political, and economic interests the importance it is likely to attach to the decision.
- Watch out for the fact that salience can be rapidly and substantially altered by external events and the intrusion of other issues.
- Remember that other decisions and factors compete for the actor's attention and, hence, salience.

Like selecting actors, the assignment of issue position, power and salience is something of an art. Systematic research can play an important role, but the importance of the skillful assessment of existing conditions by knowledgeable and sensible observers is absolutely essential. Therefore, it is important that those completing the charts be thoroughly familiar with the situation. They should converse with other knowledgeable people and gather all available information on the reactions of individuals, groups, and organizations to the proposed decision.

Step 4: Calculate the Weights for Each Actor and the Whole System

After the estimates are made for each actor, the next step is to calculate the weights each actor contributes in the decision. This is done by multiplying issue position times power times salience for each actor. Since issue position (alone of the three variables) may be either positive or negative, the sign of issue position will be the weight for each actor.

After each actor's weight is calculated, the positive and negative scores are totaled separately.

Step 5: Calculate the Policy Profile Ratio

The Policy Profile Ratio (PPR) is the net weight between those supporting and those opposing the decision being analyzed. The ratio may be viewed as a measure of the "political benefit and cost" of the decision. A value greater than 1.00 indicates a net benefit from a political and social point of view, and a value less than 1.00 indicates a net cost. A value of 1.00 indicates that the estimate of the benefits and costs is equal.

AN EXAMPLE OF POLICY PROFILING

The use of policy profiling can be illustrated with the Sanibel Island General Permit Case (see Lefkoff, Rosener, Munch).

In this case, the district engineer wanted to issue a general permit covering landfill operations within a particular five square mile area of land in his district. The purpose of the permit was to allow citizens of that area to fill in small areas of their own lands without having to go through the tedious individual permitting procedure. The district engineer wanted to protect the interior wetlands and develop a framework through which landfill requests by individual landowners could be efficiently handled.

The district engineer conducted a policy profiling analysis of the general permit decision to determine the reaction of the political and social environment, which in this case included the local residents, local governments, environmental groups and Federal government agencies. The analysis was conducted in about one hour by a group of his staff knowledgeable about the area. They completed the following steps:

Step 1: Issue Definition

The issue was defined as "establish a general permit controlling the landfill activities of private landowners with respect to the interior wetlands of a specified five square mile area."

Step 2: Identify Actors

The following actors were identified: the city government, the county government, the state departments of natural resources and environmental regulation, several environmental groups, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, land developers, and several private citizens who were influential in land development questions.

Step 3: Estimate Issue Position, Power, and Salience for Each Actor

The following table was constructed to record the values assigned by the district engineer and his staff.

ACTORS	ISSUE POSITION	POWER	SALIENCE
City Government	+3	2	3
County Government	+3	1	1
State Departements of Natural Resources and Environmental Regulation	+1	2	1
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	-2	3	2
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	-2	3	2
Land Developers	+3	1	2
Environmental Groups	+1	1	3
Influential Citizens	+1	3	3

Step 4: Calculate the Weights for Each Actor and the Whole System

The computation of weights for each actor and the whole system is shown as Figure 3.

Step 5: Calculate the Policy Profile Ratio

As shown in Figure 3, a Policy Profile Ratio (PPR) of 1.71 was computed. This indicates substantial support for the general permits. Figure 3 also shows that the only serious opposition comes from Federal agencies. However, the support for the decision from the state agencies, local environmental groups and influential citizens is not very firm; therefore, their continued support is essential to a positive decision.

Subsequently, the district engineer held a series of informal meetings at which spokespersons representing the various actors were encouraged to state their views. The representatives voiced their interests in specific details concerning the permit, coupled with high praise for the district engineer's openness in decision making. This served to strengthen the support of those groups whose initial support was estimated to be somewhat weak. After a formal public notice, the general permit was established

Figure 3

EXAMPLE: ISSUE A GENERAL PERMIT CONCERNING RESIDENTIAL LANDFILL OPERATIONS

	Actors	ISSUE POSITION		POWER		SALIENCE	=	POSITIVE SCORES	ZERO SCORES	NEGATIVE SCORES
1.	City Government	+3	x	2	x	3	=	+18		
2.	County Government	+3	x	1	x	1	=	+3		
3.	State Departments	+1	x	2	x	1	=	+2		
4.	U.S. Fish and Wildlife	-2	x	3	x	2	=			-12
5.	U.S. EPA	-2	x	3	x	2	=			-12
6.	Land Developers	+3	x	1	x	2	=	+6		
7.	Environmental Groups	+1	x	1	x	3	=	+3		
8.	Influential Citizens	+1	x	3	x	3	=	+9		
9.										
10.										
11.										
								+41		-24
								TOTAL POSITIVE SCORES		TOTAL NEGATIVE SCORES

$$\text{POLICY PROFILE RATIO (PPR)} = \frac{\text{POSITIVE SCORES}}{\text{NEGATIVE SCORES}} = \frac{41}{24} = 1.71$$

with no noticeable opposition, consistent with the positive PPR score of 1.71. (Through the whole process, the other Federal agencies expressed their opposition--ineffective as it turned out--with glum silence.)

THE VALUE OF POLICY PROFILING

There are several valuable uses of policy profiling. These include: (1) Focusing different perceptions of the political situation; (2) Forecasting an outcome; (3) Monitoring changes in position; (4) Identifying the potential for consensus.

Focusing Different Perceptions: Even within an agency, or among knowledgeable people, there are different perceptions of the political circumstances surrounding a decision which affect support for that decision. In the process of developing a policy profile, these different perceptions can either come closer together, or a procedure identified for resolving the disagreement. Usually, individuals in a group may initially disagree upon estimates, but after a period of discussion, the differences are likely to be resolved. If a basic disagreement does exist over a given estimate, a second figure can be placed in parentheses and alternative calculations can be conducted using the second set of figures. It may turn out that the differences are not that significant in arriving at the final estimates. If they are significant, additional research should be conducted to find out the reason for the discrepancies and how to resolve them.

By going through this kind of analysis, situations are avoided where a decision is made based on an incomplete or inaccurate assessment of the political situation, or where different parts of the agency have different perceptions that lead to differing levels of support for the decision within the agency.

Forecasting An Outcome: The Policy Profile Ratio (PPR) can serve as a kind of political benefit/cost ratio. In effect, it is an estimate of whether praise or blame is likely to predominate for a particular decision. Just as in an economic benefit cost ratio, the ratio must be above unity (1.0) to be positive, and the more above 1.0 it is, the more positive it is. However, these figures should be used with some caution. While the Sanibel Island example showed a ratio of 1.71, careful analysis showed that this figure included rather shaky support of some powerful actors. A change in their position could have substantially changed the ratio.

It is also possible to develop a probability figure or index of the likelihood of resolution of the issue. This index ranges from +1.00 to -1.00. If it is close to +1.00, it indicates that it is highly likely that the decision will be made. If it is close to -1.00, there is a high probability that the decision will be dropped from consideration. If the index is close to 0.00, the issue is likely to continue to remain unresolved one way or the other.

The calculation of the index is as follows:

$$IR = \frac{SPS - SNS}{TOTS}$$

Where IR is the index of resolution, ranging from +1.00 to -1.00, and SPS is the sum of each actor's positive scores from the policy profile chart SNS is the absolute value of the sum of each actor's negative scores from the policy profile chart; and TOTS is the sum of SPS and SNS. (If your analysis contains actors with "0" issue position, power or salience, the calculation becomes a trifle more complicated. We will deal with that variation shortly.) The calculation of IR for the earlier example is shown in Figure 4. It results in an IR of

+0.26, indicating a moderately strong forecast that the general permit would be issued (which, in fact, it was).

Monitoring Changes in Position: Policy profiling provides an insight into the forces surrounding a specific decision based on the information available. It is very much like a snapshot--bound by the time and perspective of the photographer. By developing a policy profile at the beginning of a decision making process, then monitoring changes, it is possible to develop a system for evaluating changing levels of political support. Experience indicates that the following factors should be monitored very closely:

- Disagreement among observers over the issue position, power or salience of a particular actor. When your data collection has revealed conflicting estimates on where particular actors stand, it is imperative that additional research be undertaken. It is also a good idea to closely monitor those actors, because disagreement among observers may be symptomatic of the changeability of the actors themselves.

- Low issue position. When actors have an issue position of "+1" or "-1", a change to neutral or a change of sides is always possible. These actors should be monitored closely to anticipate shifts.

- Salience frequently varies. Outside events can alter salience and cause major shifts. This is why timing is so important and why proposals that stimulate little or no controversy at one time can create a great deal of controversy at another time.

- Power changes slowly. In contrast to salience, the power of most actors remains relatively constant over time. Power usually evolves from institutional authority, wealth, longstanding relationships with other actors, and formal authoritative position. Major elections or changes in leadership can represent a major shift in power, but the reality of wealth and longstanding relationships may counter even these apparent shifts.

- Spill-over events from other arenas can also greatly alter the issue position, power, and salience of actors. National or even international events can have a local or regional impact. Similarly, local or regional events can influence the configuration of forces in other arenas.

Figure 4

EXAMPLE: ISSUE A GENERAL PERMIT CONCERNING RESIDENTIAL LANDFILL OPERATIONS

		ISSUE POSITION		POWER		SALIENCE	=	POSITIVE SCORES	ZERO SCORES	NEGATIVE SCORES
9.	City Government	+3	x	2	x	3	=	+18		
10.	County Government	+3	x	1	x	1	=	+3		

11.	State Departments	+1	x	2	x	1	=	+2				
12.	U.S. Fish and Wildlife	-2	x	3	x	2	=					-12
13.	U.S. EPA	-2	x	3	x	2	=					-12
14.	Land Developers	+3	x	1	x	2	=	+6				
15.	Environmental Groups	+1	x	1	x	3	=	+3				
16.	Influential Citizens	+1	x	3	x	3	=	+9				
9.												
10.												
11.												

								+41				-24
								TOTAL POSITIVE SCORES				TOTAL NEGATIVE SCORES

INDEX OF RESOLUTION (IR)	=	SPS - SNS		=		41 - 24		=		17		
		TOTS				41 + 24				65	=	+0.26

Identifying the Potential for Consensus: In many situations, the goal of the decision maker is to develop a consensus in support of a preferred position. Even after all technical criteria are satisfied, there may be five or six different options. Under these conditions, the job of the decision maker was to help the major actors agree on a decision that will most clearly satisfy those most affected and most influential.

In the Sanibel Island case, policy profiling showed that there were several key actors who did not have strongly committed positions. By utilizing the public involvement workshops, the district engineer was able to achieve a high level of agreement on the details of the permit. This was perfectly compatible with the Corps' interest in seeing a general permit developed and protecting the land. All parties met their needs by the Corps helping the actors more specifically define the policy so that they were fully satisfied with the final decision.

In some cases, however, there may be groups with high conflictual interests. In this case, the policy profiling charts can be used to identify those actors with the greatest disagreement and to help identify issues over which the actors agree. The end result might be to develop a compromise proposal that both sides can live with.